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Former State Mine Inspector Pleads Guilty to Felony Conflict Charge

(Phoenix, Ariz. – March 15, 2007) Attorney General Terry Goddard announced that former Arizona State Mine Inspector Douglas K. Martin pleaded guilty today to one count of conflict of interest, a class 6 felony.

Martin, 67, entered the plea agreement before Maricopa County Superior Court Commissioner Julie P. Newell. The charge was based on the fact that after Martin's request for a new vehicle loaded with options was rejected by the Fleet Management Office of the Arizona Department of Administration, he went to a Ford dealership and traded in a State vehicle for lease of a new Ford 4x4 F-150 XLT loaded with options. He then submitted the monthly lease invoices to the State for payment.

By acquiring the vehicle in this fashion, Martin violated state law that prohibits public officials or employees from using their position to secure any valuable thing or benefit they would not normally receive in performance of their duties, when the thing or benefit "is of such character as to manifest a substantial and improper influence on the officer or employee with respect to the officer's or employee's duties."

"This case is part of our ongoing effort to investigate and prosecute official corruption, and I'm glad to see the matter resolved," Goddard said.

According to an audit by the General Accounting Office of the Arizona Department of Administration, Martin's acquisition of the pickup truck violated Arizona Procurement Code provisions, exceeded the State Mine Inspector's delegated level of procurement authority, committed the State to an installment-purchase lease agreement that the State could not constitutionally enter into and violated the requirement that all agency leases be reported to the State. In trading in a State vehicle for the pickup truck, Martin also violated laws and regulations regarding disposal of surplus State property.

The plea agreement stipulated that the offense be designated a felony, the defendant be placed on probation and any jail term should not exceed 30 days.

Martin is scheduled to be sentenced by Maricopa County Superior Court Judge J. Richard Gama on April 17. The case was investigated by the Special Investigations Section of the Arizona Attorney General's Office.

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